

**Church worker and brother of EJK victim also gunned down by suspected state security forces in Palawan, Philippines**

UA No: 2011-09-02

**UA Date** : 30 September 2011  
**UA Case** : **Extrajudicial killing (assasination)**  
**Victim/s** : **Victim of extrajudicial killing**  
**RABENIO SUNGIT**, male, 44 years old, married with nine (9) children

- A resident of Quezon, Palawan
- An active lay leader of Taguao Outreach Congregation of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)
- Interpreter of the Pelaw'an tribe
- Leader of indigenous group PAGESAMBATAN (Pagkakaisa ng mga Katutubo or Unity of Indigenous Peoples in Palawan)
- Member of Anakpawis Partylist
- Brother of Avenio "Abe" Sungit, a member of Karapatan-Palawan and UCCP, who was also killed in February 2005

***Other victims***

Widowed: **TRINIDAD SUNGIT**

Orphaned: Nine (9) children of Rabenio Sungit with ages 19, 17, 13, 15, 11, 6, 4, 2 to 0 years old.

**Place of Incident** : Public Market along Pagayona Street, Municipality of Quezon, Palawan Province  
**Date of Incident** : 5 September 2011, at around 1:30 pm  
**Alleged Perpetrator(s)** : Two (2) motorcycle-riding masked men believed to be state security forces

**Account of the Incident:**

According to reports of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) South Luzon Jurisdiction, on September 5, 2011 at around 1:30pm, Rabenio Sungit was shot dead by an unidentified motorcycle-riding man wearing a balaclava using a .45 caliber pistol in the public market along Pagayona Street, Municipality of Quezon, Palawan Province. Rabenio was with his wife, Trinidad Sungit and their 17 year old son, when the incident happened.

Trinidad recounted that earlier of the same day, her family together with Rabenio and the children of Avenio "Abe" Sungit, (Rabenio's brother) gathered at the UCCP local church in Quezon to receive the support from the UCCP national office for the children of Abe Sungit. After the said meeting, they went to the market to buy some goods for the family. Trinidad, who was not far from Rabenio heard two gunshots and, in an instant, saw her husband fall to the ground. Trinidad saw the gunman hurriedly

leaving the scene on a motorcycle driven by another person. Her son said that he saw the perpetrators fled towards a northern direction.

Prior to the incident, Rabenio attended a Basic Human Rights Orientation Seminar in Puerto Princesa, Palawan organized by the UCCP South Luzon Jurisdiction.

Trinidad and Winio (Rabenio's brother) said that when Rabenio was still alive, they were frequently visited by elements from the Philippine Marines. Likewise, the family also noticed that Rolbing, a nephew of Rabenio and chieftain of the Pelaw'an tribe, believed to be an informer of the military, was always inquiring about Rabenio's whereabouts.

According to the family and members of the Pelaw'an tribal community, Rabenio was known to be a simple and gentle person. He did not engage in vices like drinking liquor and gambling, but instead focused his energies on working daily to make ends meet for his family. He was a kind, just and a respected figure- a leader of their community who stood up in defense of people's rights. He championed the indigenous rights for ancestral lands against encroachments of large-scale mining companies and other environmentally-destructive projects.

Families and friends are further disturbed and angered by the incident as this is not the first to happen in the Sungit family and tribal community. Rabenio's elder brother, Abe Sungit, one of the Pelaw'an leaders and Karapatan-Palawan member, a known staunch oppositionist of and organizer against destructive mining operations and human rights violations, was also a victim of extrajudicial killing. The brothers' steadfast and active involvement in just social causes for their rights as indigenous peoples solicited ill-will from the military who tagged them as "leftists" or "communists". Since 2003, Abe Sungit had been in the so-called "Order of Battle" list of the military after exposing human rights violations in the province. Abe was shot dead also by unidentified motorcycle-riding men in 2005.

### **Recommended Action:**

Send letters, emails or fax messages calling for:

1. The immediate formation of an independent fact-finding and investigation team composed of representatives from human rights groups, the Church, local government, and the Commission on Human Rights that will look into the assassination of Rabenio Sungit.
2. The indemnification of the relatives of Rabenio Sungit.
3. The military to stop the labeling and targeting of human rights defenders as "members of front organizations of the communists" and "enemies of the state."
4. The Philippine Government to withdraw its counterinsurgency program Oplan Bayanihan, which victimizes innocent and unarmed civilians
5. The Philippine Government to be reminded that it is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that it is also a party to all the major Human Rights instruments, thus it is bound to observe all of these instruments' provisions.

You may send your communications to:

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Please send us a copy of your email/mail/fax to the above-named government officials, to our address below.

URGENT ACTION Prepared by:

**KARAPATAN Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights**